

CLASSIFICATION **SECRET**

COUNTRY	East Germany	REPORT	
TOPIC	Exercises of the 19th Gds Mech Div East of Letzling Heath		
EVALUATION		PLACE OBTAINED	
DATE OF CONTENT		DATE PREPARED	22 September 1954
DATE OBTAINED			
REFERENCES			
PAGES	2	ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)	
REMARKS	This is UNEVALUATED Information		

1. A major exercise which involved units from Letzling Heath began on 17 August 1954. At about 1000, a large column arrived in Schernebeck from the direction of the training grounds. In Schernebeck, the column separated into four columns, two of which advanced toward Schoenwalde while the other two columns, as flank security details, proceeded toward the Elbe River north and south of the bulk of the movement. The northern group included approximately 80 tanks and 30 trucks which were presumably occupied by infantrymen. It proceeded to the Weissewarte Forest via Staglitz and took position at the northern edge of the woods. The position of the northernmost elements of this group extended as far as Boelsdorf on the Elbe River. The unit remained in this area up to and including 18 August. 25X1
2. The southern group consisted of approximately 20 to 25 tanks, 30 guns and 20 trucks with infantry soldiers and proceeded to the Jerchel area south of Buch on dust roads north of Tangerhuetten. The bulk of the units, in two groups, advanced from Schernebeck to the Buch area via Schoenwalde. Elements of the southern security group joined the bulk of the units in Schoenwalde. It was noted that these movements were performed very smoothly and with discipline and that the troops did not keep security distances. The movements were apparently directed by radio. Compared with march practices in 1953, the troops improved considerably. The bulk of the troops, which were headed by 8 T-34/85 tanks, included 17 JS tanks, 41 T-34/85 tanks, 14 SP guns, 8 amphibious vehicles, 2 large assault boats, 40 trucks with pontoons, 6 x 122-mm field howitzers, 16 light and medium AT guns, 8 x 37-mm AA guns, 4 four-barreled AA guns of about 20 mm caliber, and 60 trucks with infantry. 25X1
3. The river crossing in the Buch area with 2 and, in some cases, 4 ferries was done swiftly and with discipline. Engineer soldiers constructed ramps which made possible a quick loading of the ferries. The artillery units which, during the first day, changed their position three times, followed during the night on 17 August. River crossing continued throughout this night. On 17 August, the maneuver area was continually patrolled by 6 MiG-15s and 2 single-engine conventional fighter aircraft. An additional 25X1

CLASSIFICATION **SECRET**

SECRET

25X1

- 2 -

25X1

8 single-engine aircraft, presumably ground attack planes, were observed over the maneuver area every 40 minutes.

25X1

4. On 18 August, 20 T-34/85 tanks, 5 SP guns, 12 x 122-mm and 152-mm field howitzers, 6 x 76.2-mm AT guns, 16 light and medium mortars, 20 trucks with infantry and ~~train~~ vehicles arrived from the depth of the maneuver area and crossed the Elbe River on ferries. Air activity was the same as on 17 August.

25X1

5. On 19 August, only a few ferries crossed the river in both directions. During the night on 19 August and in the early morning of 20 August, the troops returned to the training area in close order of march. On 21 August, the exercise was repeated. It did not go farther than to the Elbe River and there were no river crossings. These units returned to the training area during the night on 21 August.

25X1

Comment.

the exercises involved units of the 19th Gds Mech Div and probably the bulk of the division. This was the last division of the Third Shock Army which had not yet been observed at such exercises. River crossing with ferries was observed during exercises of several other divisions in the Soviet Zone during the month of August. The fact, that the river was crossed by ferries and that no bridge was built, might indicate that these exercises were conducted with a view to a possible employment of atomic weapons. The fact, that the air force also participated, stressed the importance of the exercise. With these exercises, combined-arms training at the training grounds probably terminated before the beginning of the fall maneuvers. According to other observations, first elements of the division returned to the Magdeburg post on 21 August.

INDEX

SECRET/CONTROL - U.S. AND BRITISH OFFICIALS ONLY